

2737 Huckleberry Drive
Great Falls, MT 59404

SENATE JUDICIARY
Exhibit No. 19
Date 2/10/15
Bill No. SB202

8 Feb 2015

Concerning: Vote NO on Senate Bill 202

Dear Senator:

I am a Montana physician, practicing in our great state for the past 32 years in pulmonary disease and critical care medicine. I am solidly opposed to Physician Assisted Suicide. I have diagnosed and treated a great number of patients with "terminal illness", and assisted many of them throughout their dying and death. Never have I felt a need for Assisted Suicide.

Physician Assisted Suicide is dangerous. It alters the doctor-patient relationship in profound ways. It gives the physician power to persuade patients to take this step and becomes an easy option when treatments are ineffective or non available, or the doctor becomes frustrated or overstressed and discouraged. It assumes that a physician will always act as a perfect moral agent in the patients' best interest. It destroys trust: a patient facing a difficult illness needs to be certain that their physician wants to help them, not just dispatch them.

Physician Assisted Suicide is dangerous. It cannot be rescinded. All experienced physicians have patients who did much better, and lived much longer than expected. Prognostic uncertainty is a fact of life. How many people might die of suicide, when they could have months, or even years of quality time with their loved ones?

Physician Assisted Suicide is dangerous. There is a slippery slope, despite the proposed language in the bill. This is a classic shifting line in the sand issue. Ten years ago this idea was isolated to one state, and most everyone else thought it would never become a big issue. Now Compassion and Choices, a direct descendant of the "Hemlock Society", is pushing their agenda in multiple states. Once we accept Physician Assisted Suicide as normal, it makes acceptance of euthanasia more palatable, which has already been stated as the next goal by proponents. First voluntary "assistance", then voluntary euthanasia with lethal injections, then non-voluntary euthanasia for the mentally incompetent, or very young, or less desirable population. This has been the pattern in Belgium and The Netherlands. Nazi Germany also had a go at it in the early 1940's, which the whole world found abhorrent.

The concept of Physician Assisted Suicide is flawed: there are many more arguments against it. Senate Bill 202 is flawed. Please vote NO on this bill. Montana does not need it; Montanans do not want it.



Richard D Blevins, MD